ONE STOP CAREER CENTER SYSTEM REVIEW GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

Background

In 1994, The Department of Labor began building One Stop Career Centers in response to the recognition that the current employment and training system is characterized by fragmentation and duplication in which individuals and employers are often frustrated by a bureaucratic maze of programs and services. The One Stop vision is of a transformed system in which fragmentation and duplication are replaced by comprehensive, integrated and individualized services. In this new system, all customers are provided real choices, high quality services and information, and programs and entities are held accountable in ways that make sense and which take into account the experiences of the people the system is intended to serve.

To achieve this system transformation, the National One Stop Team identified four major principles. 1) Universality means that all job seekers and employers will have access to a defined set of core services. 2) Customer Choice and satisfaction are the linchpin of the new system, relating to both the ease of access and the completeness of the information provided to system users. 3) Integration of services now provided by many disparate agencies and programs is aimed at replacing fragmentation and duplication with "use-friendly" coordination and consolidation. 4) Accountability and a focus on results constitute the fourth principle: the new One Stop System must be Performance Driven and Outcome Based. These four principles represent the foundation of the envisioned system, guiding the actions, activities, and processes which must take place at the federal, state and local levels.

The Use of this Review Guide

This Review Guide is intended for use by Federal, State and Local staff to describe the accomplishments that One-Stop Career Centers have made in the past 18 months and to identify best practices, potential problems and needs for assistance. This information will help DOL and States to better plan strategies for the continuing implementation of One Stop Centers throughout the country.

This guide is not a monitoring tool. One Stop Centers are too new and too variegated to be held to a single rigid performance standard. The basic philosophy behind One Stop Centers is one of grass-roots innovation, flexibility and local control. They are expected to be in a fluid, continuously evolving status toward higher levels of service to their customers--the nation's employers and job-seekers. We want to form a picture of how the One Stop Center concept is being implemented throughout the country and how it conforms to the above four principles, not judge or rate the performance of each individual program or center.

The Review Process

In keeping with this emphasis on broad concepts rather than specific performance measures, any review of One Stops should include the following steps.

1. Form a review team. The review is best conducted by a team of individuals who represent a cross-section of skills and knowledge about One Stops and their programs. The team should include "peers," local or state One Stop administrators from other locations. The team might also include representatives of One Stop "customers," both job-seekers and employers.

The team should meet prior to any on-site visit and discuss the strategy and schedule for conducting the review. Team members need to be prepared to gather information which will allow them to answer the questions in the guide. The guide questions are designed to be answered by the review team, not by those being interviewed. These questions are written as much as possible to avoid yes/no type answers but rather to gather the consensus of the team members as to the progress and status of the One Stop Center being reviewed.

2. Prepare carefully before scheduling on-site visits. Team members should familiarize themselves as much as possible with the activities of the One Stop being reviewed.

Review relevant documents, including

* the original grant proposal and award

* any modifications of the grant

* quarterly reports to DOL, including the SF269

* local planning documents and progress reports sent to the state or to local governing boards

* interagency agreements between program operators

* marketing materials and plans

* customer flow charts and lists of services provided for both jobseekers, special targeted groups and employers

* any other relevant notes, correspondence and reports.

Sketch the history of the One Stop from date of original grant receipt to the present, noting the chronology of center openings, staff hiring, introduction of new or expanded services, coordination agreements and expenditures.

Make note of any special problems or concerns to be discussed with managers on site.

3. Conduct the on-site review in an efficient and helpful manner.

Be clear about the purpose of this review. Reassure the One Stop management that this is not a judgmental performance evaluation.

Schedule enough time to do a thorough job, but be mindful of the competing demands on the time of the people you want to interview. Plan to spend at least 3 to 5 days at each local site.

Interview a broad cross section of state and local officials who work within the One Stop Center's governance arrangements, including state human resource investment council leadership, and administrators of mandatory DOL programs and other involved activities. At the local level, contact lead officials, program managers, and advisory groups representing the local partnership. Remember to include business leadership, both PIC and JSEC. Finally, "customers," both the jobSeeker and the employer, should be included in a local level review.

When conducting a state-wide review, include a sufficient number of local sites to represent the size and the diversity of One Stops in the State.

Be thorough. Where specific numerical data is required, make every effort to gather complete information. This data can be used for analysis after the review is completed.

4. Consult with the whole team when preparing the post-review report.

The review team should discuss and compare the progress to date against the stated plan in the proposal, including any amendments or modifications.

And written report should identify achievements and areas for improvemen t. The report should outline specific steps for technical assistance and capacity building in the areas identified as needing improvement.

Review results are intended to guide all levels involved with the national One Stop effort. An appropriate f irst step is to discuss the draft report with State or Local officials to ensure its accuracy and completeness. Once the report is final, it should be provided to:

> * State/Local Lead One-stop Officials - to assist in their overall program management and to facilitate appropriate corrective action, capacity building, technical assistance, and program replanning.

> * Regional Federal Staff - to support technical assistance and capacity building and other appropriate regional action.

> * The National One-stop Team - to provide feedback on system strengths and weaknesses, allowing for national policy redirection, capacity building, and technical assistance.

> * Appropriate Program Offices - to provide information regarding how the respective partner programs are fitting into the One-Stop concept and where administrative action can be taken to improve program integration.

PART I: UNIVERSAL ACCESS

Major Theme

At One Stop Career Centers, all population groups must have access to a broad array of services from a comprehensive assortment of employment programs.

Basic services that one-stop centers are expected to provide to all job-seekers include, at a minimum:

Information on careers, labor markets, jobs and the availability and quality of education and training programs; career oriented testing and assessment;

Information on job openings and hiring requirements of local firms;

Referrals to openings;

Assistance in acquiring and using job search skills; self-placement opportunities;

Initial eligibility information for training and other employability development programs available in the local community.

Basic minimum services for employers should include:

Solicitation and "posting" of job orders;

Referral of qualified job-seekers to identified openings;

Screening of applicants before referral where appropriate;

Labor market information, numbers and qualifications of potential applicants;

Information on local availability of training and skill development opportunities

Review Questions

1. Has the One Stop Center Management clearly defined the specific, basic services which will be offered through the Center? Do these differ in any way from the "core" services described in the State's original grant application?

2. Does the One Stop Center have a logical, well thought out approach to ensuring that the information about these services is available to all potential customers?

Has the Center implemented special marketing strategies to reach traditionally hard to serve customers such as those with barriers to participation in the labor market?

Has the Center implemented marketing strategies to reach better educated or more highly skilled job-seekers who traditionally avoid "government" Programs?

Has the Center implemented proactive outreach to employers, many of whom have traditionally avoided "government" programs?

Does the Center encourage and promote referrals of both job-seekers and job orders from other agencies?

3. How does the location, physical appearance and initial intake procedures used by the Center contribute to its use by the entire population of job-seekers and employers?

4. How have the Center staff been trained to deal with a large and diverse customer base whose needs will vary greatly from one "client" to the next?

5. In addition to the above minimums, are any special "customized" services available through the One-Stop Career Center system for either job-seekers or employers? Are there plans to offer such services in the future?

6. Does the Center have a strategy to deal with the problem of having too many customers to be handled effectively with its limited resources? In such an event, what happens to those customers who cannot be served to the standard the Career Center Management deems appropriate?

7. Has the Center made agreements with other placement agencies--schools, colleges, CBOs, private placement agencies etc.--to share labor market information and referrals? If so, what are these and how do they work in practice?

Summary of Review

1. What is the biggest single change in the local/state workforce development system that has resulted from the implementation of the principle of Universal Service by the One Stop Center?

2. What is the biggest single problem or barrier faced to date by the One Stop Center as it tries to implement the principle of Universal Service?

3. What is the single most pressing need in the area of Universal Access --policy changes, training, technical assistance, wavers etc.--that the One Stop Center Management has from DOL at this time?

PART II: CUSTOMER CHOICE

Major Theme

Customers of One Stop Centers, both job-seekers and employers, should have a choice in how they get information, basic services, and education and training. There are two important aspects of customer choice which should be considered in designing a One Stop System. The first aspect concerns the accessibility of information and services: whether customers have more than one choice as to where and how they get basic information and services in their locality. The second aspect concerns the quality and completeness of information and services: insuring that the customer receives enough correct

information about the employment, education and training options s/he may pursue to be able to make a choice in accordance with his/her long term goals and needs.

Review Questions

A. *Accessibility of Information and Service*

1. How many "access points" to the One Stop System are there in the local community? Are these access points physical offices, electronic kiosks, telephone contact persons or something else? Are these access points located conveniently? Is the One Stop's entire geographic territory covered adequately?

2. At each access point, how does the customer receive information and services: verbally from staff, from printed materials, by phone, by self-directed research, or by computer link? In particular:

How do individuals access information on employment, training and educational opportunities?

* Direct or indirect access to employers, education and training entities.

* Entry of education/training/employment qualifications into electronic data banks.

What information on education, employment and training opportunities is available to individuals?

* Electronic job listings at local, State and national levels.

* Performance/outcome data on education and training providers.

* Supply/demand information for specific job titles at the local, State, and national levels.

* Prevailing wage data for specific occupations.

* Qualifications needed for specific occupations.

* Training costs and available financial assistance.

3. How does the One Stop Management insure that the same data and service menu is available at each access point? Describe a typical menu of services?

4. If specialized information and services are available only in specific locations, or through specific media, how are customers who have come to the "wrong door" referred to the correct location?

5. How do employers, in particular, access the One-Stop System? How does the management insure that employers have "choice" of access to the following services:

Searches for applicants by occupational title and qualifications

Ability to directly contact individuals

Ability to direct enter job openings and qualifications

Prevailing wage data

Labor Standards data

Can the above be done via remote access?

6.   Are the various local access points in the One Stop System operated by different vendors or agencies? If so, is there a strategy planned or in place to reward those operators which provide the services that are more attractive or useful to customers?

B.   *Quality and Completeness of Information and Service*

1.   How is the quality, and in particular, the timeliness of information provided to customers assured? Describe any procedures used.

2.   What linkages have been made with other placement, education, training or social service agencies in order to expand the choice of services available to customers of the One Stop Center?

3.   Does the One Stop Center have a strategy to evaluate the quality of the services provided by other placement, education, training or social services on an on-going basis, ala Consumer Reports magazine?

4.   Does the One Stop Center provide customers with counseling sessio ns at which it shares these evaluations in the course of developing a career development plan for job-seekers; or a recruitment and/or worker training plan for employers. Do One Stop Center staff provide eligibility information and/or determination prior to referring customers to other agencies?

5.   What day-to-day referral mechanisms are in place between the One Stop Center and these other service providers? Do One Stop staff make personal appointments for their customers with other agencies? What follow-up procedures are in place, both for the customer accepted by the referral agency and for the customer who is rejected?

6.   Does the One Stop Center have funds available to pay the tuition or fees of other service providers on behalf of its referred customers, either through vouchers or other means?

Summary of Review

1.   What is the biggest single change in the local/state workforce development system that has resulted from the implementation of the principle of Customer Choice by the One Stop Center?

2.   What is the biggest single problem or barrier faced to date by the One Stop Center as it tries to implement the principle of Customer Choice?

3.   What is the single most pressing need in the area of Customer Choice-- policy changes, training, technical assistance, wavers etc.--that the One Stop Center Management has from DOL at this time?

PART III: SERVICE INTEGRATION

Major Theme

In order to provide a Career Center System that is comprehensive and accessible in One Stop, programs, services and governance structures must be as fully integrated as possible. At a minimum, the One Stop system must include the DOL-funded employment and training programs. The underlying notion of One Stop is that there is an integration of programs, services, and governance structures. It is also expected that services will be integrated for the programs selected and will be available at all One Stops. Finally, there should be some integration of governance to ensure coordination, cooperation and high-quality planning and oversight.

Review Questions

1. DOL requires that, at a minimum, the following programs must be integrated into any One Stop System: Employment Service (Wagner Peyser), Unemployment Insurance, JTPA Title II, JTPA Title III (dislocated workers services), Veterans Employment Services, and Senior Community Service Employment Program (Title V). What is the strategy at this One Stop Center for providing the services formerly administered by these separate programs?

2. In addition to the above, has the One Stop made plans to integrate the operations of other DOL-funded programs such as Job Corps, School-to-Work, MSFW, Native American, homeless training, and apprenticeship programs? If so, what progress has been made to date?

3. Does the One Stop plan to integrate the services of such related, non-DOL funded programs as JOBS, Carl Perkins and other vocational education programs, Food Stamp E&T, and Pell Grants? If so, what progress has been made to date?

4. Is the One Stop System proactive in building relationships with other local placement, education, training and social service agencies not under its control? What is the nature of these relationships?

5. Overlapping or non-congruent service delivery areas has always been a major barrier to program integration. How has the One Stop System dealt with this problem?

6. Much of what is called program integration is really co-location. Is there evidence that this One Stop System has moved beyond co-location to true service integration? Examples of such evidence might include:

Use of a case management system

Use of common intake and record keeping forms or assessment instruments by two or more separate programs.

Sharing of job orders and employer contacts (and referrals) by two or more programs.

Use of common terms and definitions for eligibility determination.

Acceptance of eligibility determinations and individual assessment data by more than one program.

Cross training of staff to enable them to serve another program's (or several other programs') customers.

Integration of several programs' staff under one management structure, or personnel rules.

Integration of budgets. Sharing of common costs of space, overhead, equipment etc.

Use of a common database and MIS system--both for financial and outcome reporting--by more than one program.

Use of vouchers redeemable at various different service providers funded by different programs and grants.

7. Has the One Stop System applied for the federal or state waivers which would be necessary to accomplish the degree of integration described above? Does the One Stop System have a systematic plan to request waivers in certain areas in order to increase integration? Please describe.

8. How has the One Stop System used electronic communications techniques such as e-mail, internet, LANs and WANs, to improve service integration? How has the System used electronic tools such as computerized job search programs, job bank, career assessment programs, electronic resume search programs, ALMIS etc. to improve service quality and efficiency?

9. Does the One Stop System have a consolidated plan for staff training, skill upgrading, and other staff capacity building among its various integrated program operations? Please describe. Does the state administration encourage regular peer-to-peer information exchange among the various local One Stop Centers and their staffs?

10. Turf battles have sunk more than one good idea. How has the One Stop System integrated its governance and management structures at both state and local levels?

What roles do SJTCCs, HRICs, PICs, and JSECs (or similar boards) play in the governance of the One Stop System? Who sits on these boards?

Is there a consolidated strategic vision and plan for the future? Who wrote it, who gave input, who approved it? Did everyone agree?

Has the state passed legislation legitimating the existence of the One Stop System and program integration in state statute? Do state policy makers have a plan for dealing with the E&T block grants now being discussed in Congress?

How does the "Director" of the local One Stop Center interact with the "Directors" of the various programs which are integrated into it? Who works for whom? What are the arrangements at the State level?

Who makes day to day decisions on the management of the One Stop Centers? How does this person relate to governing or advisory boards, to state authorities?

Summary of Review

1. What is the biggest single change in the local/state workforce development system that has resulted from the implementation of the principle of Program Integration by the One Stop Center?

2. What is the biggest single problem or barrier faced to date by the One Stop Center as it tries to implement the principle of Program Integration?

3. What is the single most pressing need in the area of Program Integration--policy changes, training, technical assistance, wavers etc.--that the One Stop Center Management has from DOL at this time?

PART IV: PERFORMANCE AND OUTCOME MEASURES

Major Theme

The One Stop System must be clear in the outcomes it seeks to achieve and the consequences for failing to meet these outcomes. There must be a system to measure whether the One Stop System performance actually achieved the outcomes. This should have a strong connection to whether the customer is satisfied with the services received.

Review Questions

1. What progress has been made toward meeting the performance objectives stated in the original grant application? If progress has been small, are there any particular problems that can be identified?

2. Has the State Administration designed an evaluation system for local One Stop operations? Describe. Does this system have specific performance measures?

3. Describe any specific performance measures in use in this One Stop System:

    What is the content of the measures? Do they describe services to be offered, service delivery procedures, extent of interagency participation in planning, etc?

    What process was used to establish the measures?

    To what extent is "customer satisfaction" considered in devising these measures?

    What is the purpose of the measures: to guide the One-Stop design process at the local level, to certify One-Stop service quality, to assess program accomplishments, to identify the need for program improvements or something else?

    Are the measures quantified? If so, at what level are they set? Do they measure absolute status or progress over time? How were the baseline measures set?

What are the consequences for meeting or failing to meet any of the measures?

4. Does the One Stop System have a plan for periodically measuring "customer satisfaction," from both job-seekers and employers?

How is "customer satisfaction" defined: high placement or retention rate, repeat business from employers, learning high scores on a satisfaction survey?

Does low "customer satisfaction" automatically lead to a review of One Stop programs and practices with a view toward corrective action?

5. Is there in place now or planned for the future a formal continuous improvement model that looks at program outputs as inputs to future program direction and change? If so, describe this process.

6. To whom are the results of performance reviews (including customer satisfaction reviews) reported: State, Feds, Local or state Governing Board? Who has the authority to require the implementation of corrective action?

7. Is there a fiscal system in place to control and track expenditures under the One Stop Grant? Describe.

Are planned vs. actual expenditures within normal limits?

Have there been any unusual recent audit findings?

Are financial measures part of the One Stop performance evaluation system? Does this system look at cost per outcome, ROI or other measures?

8. What is the relationship between the One Stop Performance Evaluation System and the existing performance standards used by the One Stop's constituent programs? Are they meshed together, do they run side by side, is there no difference? Have new One Stop measures had any impact on the existing standards--or on existing performance?

Summary of Review

1. What is the biggest single change in the local/state workforce development system that has resulted from the implementation of new performance measures by the One Stop Center?

2. What is the biggest single problem or barrier faced to date by the One Stop Center as it tries to develop and implement the new performance measures?

3. What is the single most pressing need in the area of performance standards--policy changes, training, technical assistance, wavers etc.--that the One Stop Center Management has from DOL at this time?

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